

LETTER SENT TO FCC VIA EMAIL

Docket 05-231

-----Original Message-----

From: TDIExDir@aol.com [mailto:TDIExDir@aol.com]

Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2005 8:54 AM

To: Kevin Martin; Michael Copps; Jonathan Adelstein

Cc: Monica Desai; Thomas Chandler; Amelia Brown; cheppner@nvrc.org; jerald.jordan@verizon.net; bloch@nad.org; tportis@hearingloss.org; JaneS256@aol.com; bbattat@hearingloss.org; brick@nad.org; Roy.Miller@mcdhh.mo.gov; tom_driscoll@comcast.net

Subject: special thanks & action request on TV captioning to FCC Chairman & Commissioners

December 21, 2005

Chairman Kevin J. Martin

Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, District of Columbia 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

RECEIVED

FEB - 1 2006

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Martin, and Commissioners Copps and Adelstein,

Kudos go to the FCC for its recent formal rulemaking proceeding (FCC 05-142, July 21, 2005) on several aspects of the Commission's TV closed captioning rules. This action was in response to the petition filed by Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc., et al, CG Docket No. 05-231.

For far too long, individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing have endured being locked out of television as a source of information and entertainment. This frustration was reflected in the vast number of comments from individuals who were deaf and hard of hearing, their families, service providers, and consumer advocacy organizations among the more than 1,600 filings made to the proceeding.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN) was enormously pleased by the large turnout of comments for this proceeding. Since 1997 when the current captioning regulations were implemented, the members of our organizations and other consumers across the nation have eagerly anticipated the January 1, 2006 deadline when the 100% benchmark kicks in for most new programming.

The petition filed by TDI et al basically asks that the Commission follow closely its current set of regulations to assure that functional equivalency takes place when we watch captioned television programs. It also proposes a series of solutions for the FCC and the TV industry to conduct additional monitoring and enforcement activities. DHHCAN respectfully requests that the FCC initiate action immediately to ensure full accountability for quality captioning under a well-defined regulatory climate when appropriate parties are held accountable to provide captions intact at all times. This will ensure that all Americans deaf and hard of hearing Americans will have a consistently positive TV viewing experience.

In this season of holiday tidings, DHHCAN wishes to congratulate the Commission for its efforts for this formal proceeding. We highly commend the Commission for inviting input from all stakeholders on a range of issues with TV captioning. It is clear that the Commission understands very well the importance of TV captioning as a vital information access service not only for Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing, including senior citizens who lose hearing later in life as well as those learning English as a second language. This service is as crucial to the rest of the American population in areas of language skills development, literacy, emergency response, and coping with noisy environments (gyms, bars, airports, etc.) as well as quiet environments (hospitals, libraries, when others are sleeping nearby, etc.). Recently, the Commission has been noted for its excellence in rendering significant regulatory action that reaffirmed basic rights and privileges of the average citizen as a participant in the communications and information infrastructure. Timely access and full information from television is part and parcel to experiencing first-class American citizenship.

No. of Copies rec'd 0
List ABCDE

DHHCAN, established in 1993, serves as the national coalition of organizations representing the interests of deaf and/or hard of hearing citizens in public policy and legislative issues relating to rights, quality of life, equal access, and self-representation. DHHCAN also provides a forum for proactive discussion on issues of importance and movement toward universal, barrier-free access with emphasis on quality, certification, and standards. Member organizations are: American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB), American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA), American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC), Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA), The Caption Center at WGBH, Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD), Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD), Deaf Seniors of America (DSA), Gallaudet University, Gallaudet University Alumni Association (GUAA), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA), National Catholic Office of the Deaf (NCOD), Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.(TDI) and USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF).

DHHCAN reiterates its special gratitude to the Commissioners for this important proceeding, and it looks forward to participating in related activities with the Commission, other consumer groups, and TV industry trade groups during the coming new year 2006.

Sincerely,
Claude L. Stout
Chair
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Network

cc: Monica Desai, Chief, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Cheryl Heppner, Vice Chair, DHHCAN
Jerald Jordan, Secretary-Treasurer, DHHCAN